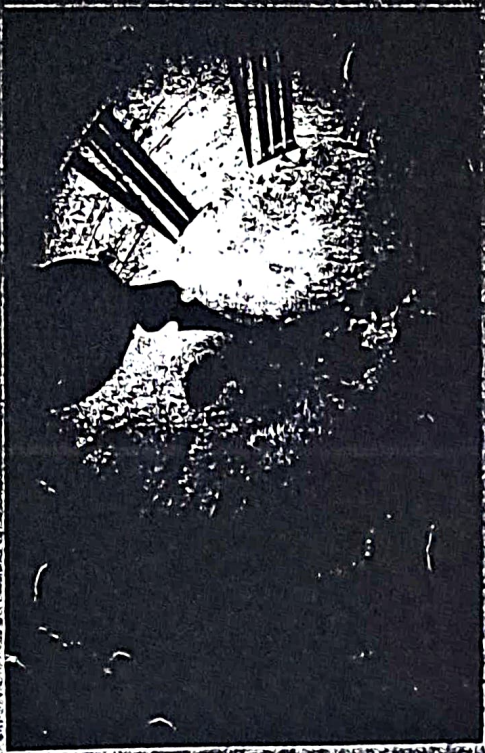


JIM MORGAN IN CONTEMPORARY MANAGEMENT

TIME MANAGEMENT



KEY TO SUCCESS IN LIFE

PUNJAB AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT & EXTENSION
TRAINING INSTITUTE (PAMETI)
PAU CAMPUS, LUDHIANA



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INTRODUCTION

*Dr. B. RAJENDER,
DIRECTOR, AGRICULTURE
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Don't be fooled by the calendar. There are only as many days in the year as you make use of. One man gets only a week's value out of a year while another man gets a full year's value out of a week.

-Charles Richards

Concept and Guidance
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Time is the most precious, uncontrollable and perishable thing that we all have, it can't be replaced with something else and also can't be saved. For each and every activity, we require time. Even simple shifting of our eyes from one person to another takes few seconds of our precious time. We can't stop it. It is continuously running. Most often people complain that they didn't find time to do certain things, but in fact it's their inability to manage their time. Time management is a skill only few people master, but it is one that all people need.

The greatest single problem that we all have today is- 'Time Scarcity'. Most of the people in our country are just wasting their time by sitting idle at their home because they have nothing to do that has value. Whereas, working people have too much to do, but too little time for their personal lives. Most people often feel overwhelmed with responsibilities and duties, but the harder they work, the further behind they feel. Because instead of clearly deciding about what we want to do, we continually react to what is happening around us. Pretty soon we lose all sense of our control on time. And we feel that our life is running us, rather we are running our life. So, time management is the important aspect if we want to have a control on our life.

Importance

A common fact that governs our life is that everybody has the same time i.e. 24 hours in a day. Then why some people are more efficient and successful as compared to others. And only answer to this problem is- Time Management.

- **Time is a Limited & Non-Renewable Resource:**

Remember that time is a limited and non-renewable resource. It is continuously passing and will never wait for you. And time once lost, can never be gained again. There is a Chinese proverb that says 'no amount of gold will buy you time that has passed'. You can cover each and every loss; money can be earned again, objectives can be accomplished later on even if failures occur, but the time that has gone can never be recovered. So, from starting, try to manage your time.

- **Serenity in Life:**

Serenity, here, means clarity, or calmness in life. So, if you properly managed your time. i.e. if you know exactly that what you need to do and what you have to do in near future or at which time, then there will be no confusion. And you can easily take the further decisions of your life with proper clarity.

- **Reduce Stress:**

From lots of experiments, it is very much clear that most of the people today are suffering from stress. And one of the major reasons behind this is the lack of efficient time management. People, who are not practicing time management skills, are normally under work pressure because they don't know that which thing is most important and of vital priority to them and at what time which task needs to be completed. As a result, they try to do number of activities at one time, but nothing gets accomplished even when they work hard. So, to

prepare a task list and to allocate time to each and every activity is important.

- **Proper Discipline:**

When you have prepared a task list which describes that what needs to be accomplished in a given time, there will be a smooth flow of work and as a result, your life will also be going smoothly. You need to have a clear idea about the goal of your life, which will decide your path. And this discipline will ultimately help you in getting success in your personal and professional life.

- **Efficiency in Work:**

Being efficient at work is about managing your time. Optimum use of time means you accomplish more in least possible time. And when you do more with efficiency, this translates to better performance, more trust and respect from your colleagues and boss. And hence, you get assigned to more important projects in future. Note one thing that if you want to climb higher at the ladder of success, no matter in whichever field you are, never forget the importance of time management.

- **Monitor Progress:**

At any given time, we all have an objective in our lives. We are continuously working for the success of that particular objective; no matter whether that objective is related to our personal life or professional life. But our aim is to get success. And for this purpose continuous monitoring is must. And we can only monitor or control the progress if we have already established standards against which we can compare the progress of that objective. And these standards are the part of time management because every standard contains a task list with proper allotted time. If we don't have time management chart for our work/objective, then it will never come to an end and we can never get success.

- **Price of Time Inefficiency:**

This is for salaried persons that how much they are wasting because of their time inefficiency. What is the price of inefficient time management for an organization? That is a crucial question people should ask and promptly address. Statistics show that if a person - on an average - loses one hour of productivity each day due to disorganization/inefficiency. That means he will be losing one and half month in a year.

Time Management

This is not a new term for anyone. You all have heard this term, but very few exactly know the definition of Time Management. Most of the people defined Time Management as "Management of Time" in order to make the best use of it. Whereas, a very strange, but the biggest truth is that we can't manage time, it just is. But then what is it????

Think about time... time passes at a set rhythm. You can neither store it nor use it faster, and even you can't change it; so, how can you manage it? We all have same 24 hours per day, which can't be changed at any cost. Then, what one can manage is his own life, his own activities or actions according to the available time. We can change ourselves or adjust in tune with the time. E.g. if we are to board the train at 4:00 a.m.; either we have to sleep early or cut short our sleeping hours and make up this deficiency during journey.

So the exact/correct definition of Time Management is "the management of our own activities/events, to make sure that they are completed within the available and offered time".

In simple words, the time management is all about knowing 'what' to do and 'when' to do.

Smart time managers know that there is much more to do than one can easily do. So instead of trying to do it all, smart time managers are very picky about their activities and time. They choose to focus and spend their time only on doing few projects that will really make a difference, rather than spending all their time doing many things that don't really matter much.

Poor Time Management Indicators

Some of the indicators of Poor time management are listed below:

- **Constant rushing**
- **Frequent delays in every task**
- **Low productivity and energy**
- **Frustration** (e.g. Oh, why things are not moving ahead???)
- **Impatience** (e.g. 'where the hell is that information I've asked him for?')
- **Confusion between alternatives selection**
- **Difficulty in setting and achieving goals.**

Myths about Time Management

A myth means 'Imaginary Things' or 'Some Stories that are not realistic' but are perceived to be related. Here are some myths of time management that are true for all of us:

Myth 1:- There are too much to do; I can't handle it all:

This is the most obvious reason, when you don't have the mood or don't want to do some task. You even don't want to try. It is not necessary that one should perform each and every task immediately or at the same time. But at least one

should try to perform by dividing those tasks or by prioritizing them. Thus, this myth is nothing more than a lame excuse.

Myth 2:- There is plenty of time; I can do that later:

This is the exact opposition of myth 1. People normally waste most of their time by postponing the things because they thought that they have enough time to perform later on. And at the end, they get overburdened or forget to do, e.g. normally in offices, a report or letter which is not date bound or one has sufficient time to respond is used to place on the desk, and more files or papers which are received later are placed over it and people ultimately forget to respond to that letter or report and that task is performed when there is a reminder or on the last date. So, there should be a realistic view of how much time is worth and how much of it there is.

Myth 3:- I am busier than usual right now; I will do that later:

Complex one. This is not a myth every time. Occasionally, it is really true, of course. But as a fact again, we can never be free. Like, I am about equally busy all the time, really, with a few exceptions only. The life will always remain such complex. And it's all up to us that how we find time.

Myth 4:- Planning my time just wastes more time:

But the actual research shows the opposite. No doubt, the process involved in time management occupies time. But remember it occupies, not wastes. The only way we can waste our time is when we ends up with something that is of very little or of no value. So, spending something to manage our life is not a waste of time. It is a favour done for ourselves.

Myth 5:- Planning causes stress; and all stress is bad:

It is the common saying by most of the people- 'directly do the work which is required to be done at a particular time, who will do the planning and put one self into un-necessary stress'. But this is not true at all. In fact stress is not good for

physical and mental health but at the same time stress is not always bad. Stress up to a level is good enough which will ultimately lead to success.

Myth 6:-The busier I am; the better I am using my time:

Being busy all the time doesn't mean the efficient use of time. May be you have just wasted a part of time by paying attention to some un-necessary things and thus working with reduced efficiency. So, first of all examine the things which are most important to you at a particular point of time.

Categorization of People

It is very easy to say that people are not efficient in managing time. But, the fact behind is that there are various categories of people which effects the way that how they manage their time. Different kinds of persons always behave in different manner. You need to understand that in which category you are, so that you can manage yourself accordingly. And after understanding your own personality type, this will be easy for you to apply the principles of time management on yourself. Based on the typical patterns of behaviour that tend to effect people's attempts at effective time management, Susan Ward ("Are You Sabotaging Your Time Management Efforts") classifies people into different personality types that help them to discover their standard behavioural responses to events and provide them with some clues for effective time management:

- **The Firemen:**

For them, every event is a crisis. They are always seen busy extinguishing the fires. They find scarcely any time for anything else and do not spare a thought on time management. Tasks keep piling up around them, while they are seen rushing from fire to fire all day.

- **The Over-Committers:**

They just cannot say 'No' to anybody. They oblige and try to please everybody. At the mere instance of seeking Proposal, they will chair another committee, take on another Project, or organize yet another community event. Consequently, none of the tasks receives complete attention and remains half-done.

- **The Aquarians:**

There is such a thing as being too "laid-back", especially when it starts interfering with their ability to finish tasks. Getting to things that is when things get to them is not time management; it is simple task avoidance.

- **The Chatty Kathy's:**

They born to socialize, they have amazing oral communication skills and cannot resist exercising them at every Opportunity. Every interaction becomes a long drawn out conversation, especially if there is an unpleasant task on their desk which they would like to put off.

- **The Perfectionists:**

Exactitude (exactness or correctness) is their watchword, and they feel that no rushed job can be a good job. Finishing tasks to satisfaction is such a problem; that every time they need some more time zones.

Categorization of Time

In order to understand the concept of time management, you should be aware about the aspects or categories of time in general. You need to understand that how can you divide your time in order to get best out of it. You can divide your overall time (i.e. 24 hours) into three categories (figure 1).

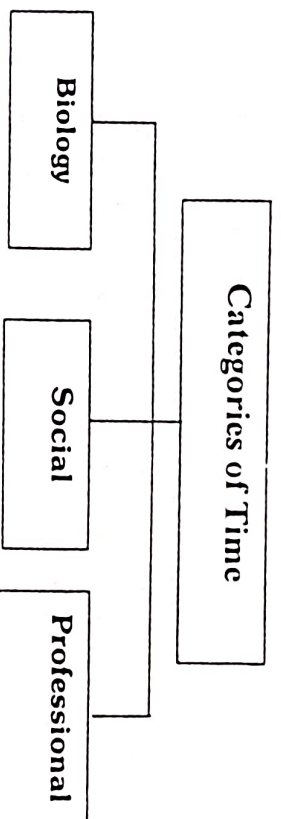


Figure 1: Categories of Time

- **Biological:**

It is related to our bodily functions, which is the most important aspect, because maintaining our health is the foremost requirement. It includes:

- Sleeping
- Taking food
- Taking bath/ other similar activities
- Recreation activities
- Physical exercise

People should spend required time on these functions. But as a fact, when one feels over-burdened with number of tasks, he usually tries to reduce the time required for biological functions. This practice can be useful for a short time or intermittently, but its regular adoption hinders one's efficiency as well as physical fitness which ultimately causes aspersions on our self managerial capacity.

- **Social:**

It is related to society. Now, as everybody knows that human being is a social animal and no one can live alone or in isolation. And if you want to live in this society, you definitely have to spend some time for it. And our society covers firstly our self, then our family and other related groups:

- **Self Time:** People should at least keep reasonable time for themselves i.e. for thinking, introspection, meditation, reading and other activities of their own interest.
- **Family Time:** Strong and happy family life is a pillar of success in both personal and professional life. It provides base for success. If there is strong family base behind us, then no one can beat us in our life. So, one should spare reasonable time for his family depending upon the daily work schedule.
- **Social Time:** This is also required because one can't ignore social gatherings like weddings, parties and other religious functions, which fulfill your obligations towards society and also give you some time to relax which ultimately improves your efficiency.

After biological functions, this is the second thing which people use to ignore because of their busy professional life. But we all need to have a balance with this.

- **Professional:**

Now, when you know that you have to spend some time for biological and social aspects. At the same time, profession is such an activity, where no one has other choice, especially when some one is working. And generally working hours are fixed; people can't ignore this. So, here question is that how one can optimally utilize his time at work. So, you should avoid various time wasters at work like:

- Disorganized work
- Poor communication
- Unnecessary long meetings
- And other interruptions.

How to Manage your Time

Now, you are aware about the importance and categories of time management. And for better utilization of time, one needs to maintain a balance between all the three categories i.e. biological, social and professional. But the main question here is how?

So, here is a simple time management plan, which can be helpful in one's daily routine:

- **Deciding about the mission of life:**

Mission, here, means your aim or motive in life i.e. what you want to achieve, or what is the level where you want to reach in your life, e.g. may be you want to be a head of the organization where you are working or want to start your own business of a particular commodity, or may be your aim is to become the richest or famous person of the country. This is the foremost requirement to decide about the mission of your life. Lets make this clear from an example of an expert of time management:

One day, an expert in time management was speaking to a group of managers. As he stood in front of the group of high-powered over-achievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz" and he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouth mason jar and set it on the table in front of them. He also produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is this jar full?" Everyone yelled, "Yes".

The time management expert replied, "Really?" He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. He dumped some gravel in and tapped the jar on the table causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces

Between the big rocks. He then asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?" "Probably not" one of them answered.

"Good!" he replied. He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in the jar and it went into all of the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is this jar full?" "No!" the audience shouted.

Once again he said, "Good". Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the spectators and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?"

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it!"

"No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is, "If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all!"

What are the 'big rocks' in your life: time with loved ones, your faith, your education, your dreams, a worthy cause, teaching or mentoring others?

Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first or you'll never get them in at all. So, tonight, or in the morning, when you are reflecting on this short story, ask yourself this question, "What are the 'big rocks' in my life?" Then, put those in your jar first.

So, this is the first thing that you need to choose with lots of care and precaution and according to your ability and capability and also don't forget that capability changes with time. Your mission and further your goals are 'Big rocks' of your life. After deciding about the mission, you will set your path to achieve that and whole of your efforts will be towards that mission only.

• **Setting goals:**

Goals are your objectives according to your decided mission. These are totally realistic and qualitative. It also includes time span, e.g. if you want to become head of your organization, then you will decide that what qualification do you want for that and what you need to do year by year. And for this year, if you have decided that you need to do course of PGDAEM (Post Graduate Diploma in Agricultural Extension Management), then this will become your goal for this one year. These goals will provide you with a particular direction in a particular time span. Basically, apart from your mission, you need to set goals in three major areas of your life:

- o First, you need family and personal goals. These are the reasons that why you get up in the morning or why you work hard or upgrade your skills. It can include a bigger house, a better car, or anything regarding your relationships with your spouse and family.
- o Second area of goals is your business and career goals. Business and career goals are absolutely essential even for the achievement of your family and personal goals because you need money to fulfill your first level goals, which you can generate only from second level goals.
- o Third type of goals is your personal development goals. Remember you must build yourself if you want to build your life. You can't achieve much more on the outside than what you have achieved on the inside. Your outer life will be a reflection of your inner life. So, if you wish to achieve worthwhile things in your personal and business goals, you must

become a worthwhile person in your own self-development. And the most important component of self-development is enhancement in the knowledge level which you can gain by reading books, newspapers and more.

- **Prepare task list:**

Task list is the list of all the activities in detail which you need to accomplish for your particular goal. According to the set goals, you need to prepare a task list. You are required to note down each and every activity on a paper according to daily basis, which will ultimately help you not to forget anything.

- **Set priorities:**

After preparing a task list, now it is very important to assign the priorities to each and every task. Because you need to know clearly that which task is most important to you and which needs to accomplish at which time. Assigning priorities is the real essence of time management. Without setting priorities you will not be able to manage your time because to accomplish each and every task at the same time is not possible at all. So, it is essential that we prioritize tasks and categorize them into urgent, very important, important and wasting time categories. This will help us lot in improving our time efficiency. There are some techniques that can help us in setting priorities, which will be discussed later on.

- **Get started:**

Do not waste much of the time in thinking only. Once you have decided to do something, immediately start that. Because often, people waste much more time in thinking than actual time required for accomplishing the task, e.g. people normally waste 2 or 3 days in just thinking to start or in waiting for right time to start a 1-day task. So, start the task as soon as

possible after proper planning. Once you will start the actual working, success itself will come to your way.

- **Do not say YES to too many things:**

✓ Learn how to say NO. This is the most important thing to be kept into mind because sometimes people fall into unexpected problems because of this 'YES'. This is the biggest mistake that people generally made by saying YES to too many things. This causes you to live to the priorities of others, rather than according to your own. Every time you agree to do something, some thing else will not get done. So, firstly check your own limits i.e. that how much you can do at a given time.

- **Deal with it for once and for all:**

People often start a task, think about that for sometime, and then lay it aside. This gets repeated over and over. This is entirely wastage of time, nothing else. So, either deal with the task right away i.e. once you have started something, do not leave without completion, or decide clearly when to deal with that.

- **Set start and stop times:**

To set start and stop time is the most important, because without this, your objective/task will never come to an end. So, when arranging start times, also arrange stop times. This will help you in monitoring and controlling the performance and progress. And you will be able to schedule your own and others activities clearly, which will ultimately improve your performance.

Prioritization

To achieve the maximum success and productivity, it is essential that you understand which tasks are most important to us and which ones are not. For this purpose you need to assign

priorities to each and every task. And here, are some techniques which can help you in setting priorities:

• **ABC Analysis:**

This technique is based on assumption that all tasks are not equally important and valuable, so doesn't require the same kind of attention. So you need to categorize all your tasks according to its importance in the achievement of your goals. Typically, we see that a small portion of work is the most valuable, and therefore needs maximum attention & efforts and - that's called 'A'. The next most valuable section is B, the next is C and so on.

We can divide these as follows:

- o A- less work but having **highest priority** (most important)
- o B- **less important** as compared to A-category tasks
- o C- **least important** (lowest priority), we can ignore for sometime

Basically it shows you which tasks need more attention & efforts and which need less, e.g. if you are organizing a training programme, you need to do various activities like training need identification, prepare trainees (call nominations), arrangement of lodging, prepare schedule, finalize resource persons, collection of study material to distribute, arrange physical amenities/equipments, arrangement of training place/hall, arrangement of food, evaluation & feedback, evaluation after 6 months of training and so on. Now, if you arrange all these activities according to ABC analysis, then you can finish all the tasks in almost half of the time, i.e. divide the tasks like:

CATEGORIES		
A	B	C
1. Training Need Identification 2. Call Nominations 3. Prepare the Schedule	1. Finalize Resource Persons 2. Lodging Arrangements 3. Arrangement of Training Place 4. Arrangement of Physical Amenities	1. Arrangement of Food 2. Proper check of Training Hall 3. Continuous checking of Physical facilities 4. Collection of Study Material 5. Evaluation & Feedback 6. Evaluation after six months

According to this table, now you need to concentrate mainly on 'A' category tasks, because they are of highest priority. Whereas, 'C' category tasks are least important, and if there occurs any problem in tasks of this category, you can immediately rectify these errors as these will not take much time and even not of that much importance.

• **Pareto Analysis (80:20 Rule):**

It is the technique used for selection of a limited number of tasks that produce significant overall effect in least possible time. This technique states that '80% of the results can be achieved by doing 20% of the tasks or in 20% of the disposable time'.

For more explanation, you can say that this 80/20 rule can be applied to almost anything, like:

- o 80% of customer complaints arise from 20% of your products or services.
- o 80% of delays in schedule arise from 20% of the possible causes of the delays.
- o 20% of your products or services account for 80% of your profit.
- o 20% of your sales-force produces 80% of your company revenues.
- o 20% of a systems defects cause 80% of its problems.

So, firstly check that which tasks are falling in category of those 20% which will lead to the 80% success, so that you can save your time by ignoring or postponing other 80%. This technique is very much similar to the ABC analysis. If we compare both techniques, then A category covers all those 20% tasks (most important), and firstly by doing those, we will easily get close to our success.

Exercise - Applying the 80/20 Rule

Step 1: Choose a goal or objective that you want to accomplish. A measurable goal such as "to organize 10 training camps and 15 demonstrations by December" works best, but you can also do this exercise on an intention, such as "to organize more trainings and demonstrations this time". Write down your goal or objective on a paper, so that there will never be a chance to forget.

Step 2: Brainstorm a list of all the possible actions you can think of that will lead to achievement of your goal or objective. Include the actions you've already been taking, as well as any new ideas. Don't edit or cancel your ideas; nobody will read that, all is upto you. Write down each & everything you can think of. Prepare a detailed list.

Step 3: Now, ask yourself, "If I only took 20% of these actions, which tasks would likely produce 80% of the results?" Circle each action which fits in the top 20% category. If you don't know which actions will create the most results, then include some more actions that will help you learn the answer to that question or you can take help from one of your senior who can guide you properly.

Step 4: Commit to taking the circled (high priority) actions first. Also, commit not to do any low priority actions until the high priority actions are complete. Doing the high priority actions will sometimes require more thinking, creativity, or effort initially. However, you will likely achieve your objective before you even get to the low priority actions, saving massive amounts of time and effort.

• **Paired Comparison Analysis:**

In paired comparison, analysis, also known as paired choice analysis, a number of options/tasks are compared to each other and the results are tallied to find the single task to perform. A range of all possible options is listed. Each option is compared against each of the other options, determining the preferred option in each case. The results are tallied and the option with the highest score is the preferred option. Paired Comparison Analysis helps to set Priorities. Following are the steps:

- o List the options/tasks you will compare and assign a letter (e.g. A, B, C.....) to each option.
- o Set up a table with these options as both row and column headings.
- o Block out cells on the table where you will be comparing an option with itself (e.g. A with A, B with B etc.) because you are comparing options with each

- o other, not by itself. These will normally be on the diagonal running from the top left to the bottom right.
- o Also block out cells on the table where you will be duplicating a comparison (e.g. firstly you have compared A with B, so next time when you are again comparing B with A, this is duplicate transaction, so block that cell). Normally these will be the cells below the diagonal.
- o Compare the option in the row with the one in the column. For each cell, compare each option with each other option, one-by-one. For each comparison, decide which option is most important and write down the letter in the cell. Then assign a score to show how much more important it is. Score the difference in importance from 0 (no difference) to 3 (major difference).
- o Finally, consolidate the results by adding up the total of all the values for each of the options. You may want to convert these values into a percentage of the total score.

Example: Suppose an extension worker has a busy schedule for one day. He has a number of tasks to perform like:

- o To visit a demonstration field
- o To have a visit at Kissan Méla in his own district
- o To attend one training programme for his self-development
- o To do survey for the preparation of some development plan

Firstly, he should draw up the paired comparison analysis table, and then should compare the options and scored

their difference in importance (in numbers or percentage), as shown in figure 2:

	Demonstration Field (A)	Kissan Méla (B)	Training Programme (C)	Survey (D)
Demonstrated Field (A)	Blocked (Step 3)	A, 1	C, 2	A, 1
Kissan Méla (B)	Blocked (Step 4)	Blocked (Step 3)	C, 2	B, 1
Training Programme (C)	Blocked (Step 4)	Blocked (Step 4)	Blocked (Step 3)	C, 3
Survey (D)	Blocked (Step 4)	Blocked (Step 4)	Blocked (Step 4)	Blocked (Step 3)

Figure 2: Paired Comparison Analysis

Finally, adds up all the values and find out the percentage if required. The values of given table are as follows:

- o A = 2 (20%)
- o B = 1 (10%)
- o C = 7 (70%)
- o D = 0 (----)

Here, it is very important to attend a training programme, which has been conducted especially for him; and to visit the demonstration field of a farmer, where that farmer needs his help; and he should postpone other work for 1 or 2 days or should assign those tasks to somebody else.

- The Action Priority Matrix (Or Important/Urgent Matrix):

The Action priority Matrix, also known as The Important/Urgent Matrix (figure 3) is a very important

technique that helps you choose which activities to prioritize and which ones you should drop. Most people take important and urgent as one or the same thing. But there is a lot of difference between both.

Important: Important activities have an outcome that leads to the achievement of your goals. The importance of a task drives how much 'time' you want to spend on it. Notice that this is independent of 'urgency' and for any important task, the quality of your output will often relate to the time you spend on it.

Urgent: Urgent tasks are deadline based. These activities demand immediate attention, and are usually associated with an uncomfortable problem or situation that needs to be resolved immediately.

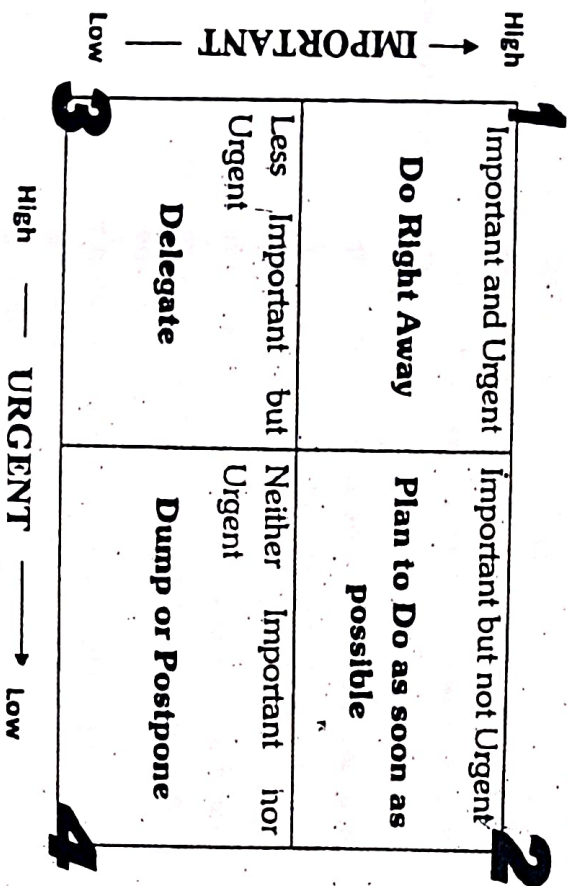


Figure 3: Action Priority Matrix

o **Important and Urgent**

These are the tasks that must be done now. These tasks should be cleared away as soon as possible, as they are often related to the actual work that is most important to us and are also date/time bound.

- Critical issues that arise
- Accidents
- Emergencies and crises
- Deadlines
- Scheduled appointments and meetings

o **Important but not Urgent**

These are the most important tasks of all but not urgent i.e. means their deadlines are in future i.e. no immediate attention is required. These are the activities that allow you to reach your goals and objectives. These should be scheduled and worked on every day accordingly.

- Working on specific projects or goal tasks
- Planning and Scheduling
- Maintain Relationships
- Crises prevention
- Personal development i.e. reading, exercise etc.

o **Less Important but Urgent**

These activities are urgent and needs to be completed as soon as possible, but are not of utmost importance; and can take up a large proportion of your time if you do these yourselves. So, these are often avoidable by delegating the job to others.

- Routine work
- Daily unscheduled tasks
- Maintenance work
- General fill-in jobs

The average person gets one interruption every ten minutes, or approximately six an hour, or 40-50 per day. The average interruption takes five minutes, totaling about 3-4 hours, or near about 50% of the average workday. 80% of those interruptions are generally of "little value" or "no value" creating approximately 2-3 hours of wasted time per day; i.e. 20% of the average workday is spent on "urgent" and "important" things, while 80% of the average workday is spent on things that have "no value".

Some interruptions do need to be dealt immediately, while others need to be managed. Two excellent tools that discuss how to minimize your interrupted time are **Important/Urgent Matrix** and **Managing Interruptions**. The Important/Urgent Matrix has already been discussed; and now managing interruptions will be covered here.

Everybody needs to manage the interruptions. But first of all, you need to check that **'Are you the cause of your own interruptions?'**

- Are you using interruptions as an excuse to avoid your work? Once you have been interrupted, it can be very tempting to use this as an excuse to stop what you are doing. Note down a reminder of where you were before your interruption, and make sure that you get back to it straight afterwards.

Do you start another project before completing the first one? Don't leave your continuing project incomplete. Incompletions reduce your energy. Whilst complete work does take more time initially, it will save your time in the long run.

- Do you procrastinate? Are you habitual to procrastinate your work? Stop procrastinating and Take Action - do it NOW!
- Are you distracted by something or someone? Try to avoid all the things those are distracting you.

Five Tips for Minimizing Interruptions

- **Reduce Telephone Interruptions:** Do you have voicemail? If so, start using it for a couple of hours a day so that you can have uninterrupted time to get on with your work. But if you don't have any voicemail, then ask any of your subordinate, who has time, to take your messages for you. And when you feel that you have some idle time, then return all the important calls back to those persons and start getting into the habit of having a "telephone hour" each day. By grouping your phone calls together, they will take less of your time because they are no longer interruptions.
- **Lengthy Unnecessary Conversations:** Try to shorten the length of your unnecessary conversations and don't do anything to extend any other similar interruption. If someone visits your desk or phones you, stand up. It is less comfortable to have a conversation while standing, and they tend to be shorter as a result.
- **Do Not Disturb:** Try to schedule some "self time" each day. This is time when you can close your door, put up the 'Do Not Disturb' Sign, and get on with your work. You should also schedule time when you are available to see colleagues. Once you educate colleagues, they will soon get used to the idea that you are only available between set timings like 11:00 and 01:00 each day.

- Small talk with colleagues, subordinates and superiors
- Interruptions e.g. phone calls, visitors etc.

○ **Neither Important nor Urgent**

These are the activities that you let creep into your day.

These are often tasks you shouldn't be doing at all, but you often use those as an excuse to escape from other important tasks.

- Time wasting – idle chatting, long breaks
- Day-dreaming
- Irrelevant distractions – internet surfing, socializing online, texting friends, personal phone calls
- Trivial work – busy work, pushing paper, other procrastination tasks etc.

• **POSEC Method:**

POSEC method is again a very important method. It offers clear guidance for assisting an individual in prioritizing goals. POSEC stands for "**Prioritize by Organizing, Streamlining, Economizing, and Contributing.**"

- **Prioritize:** To prioritize means to put important things first. It includes the main goals of your life for which you are surviving i.e. your basic needs like food, shelter and cloth etc.

- **Organizing:** Organizing involves making a plan to work on goals that will help the individual feel more stable and secure in life. It includes the things which you regularly need to accomplish e.g. your office work or your main project upon which you are working.

- **Streamlining:** Streamlining applies to those "dirty" little jobs that no-one wants to do, but everyone must do, such as daily work for survival or for achievement of goals e.g. maintaining daily records and other similar kind of paper work..

- **Economizing:** Economizing refers to things that should be done, or things that are enjoyable, but which also may not be urgently in need of being done (having lowest priority). E.g. spending some time with friends and colleagues and chatting with them, no doubt, is an enjoyable task. And everyone should even do this because this is the best source of refreshment, but at the same time don't forget that this is not that much important and urgent task that you can't leave on some busy day.

- **Contributing:** Contributing involves rest of the important things which will make a difference e.g. social contribution and providing help to some needy helpless persons.

Managing Interruptions

Having a plan and knowing how to prioritize is one thing. The next issue is to know what to do to minimize the interruptions that you face during your day. Interruptions usually happen when there is a conflict between two or more works/actions and it is widely recognized that extension workers or managers get very little un-interrupted time to work on their priority tasks. There are phone calls, information requests from seniors, questions from farmers/employees, and a whole host of events that crop up unexpectedly.

him to get rid of this habit. When they get the confidence in their skills and abilities, they can surely overcome this problem. But there is a need to seriously take this problem, to understand the real bad effects behind this and to overcome as soon as possible.

How to Overcome Procrastination?

Whatever the reason behind procrastination, it must be recognized, dealt with and controlled before you miss opportunities or your career is out of the direction. Following are some steps which may help you to overcome this problem:

Step 1: Recognize that you are Procrastinating:

If you're honest with yourself, you probably know when you're procrastinating.

But to be sure, you first need to make sure you know your priorities. Putting off an unimportant task isn't procrastination, it's probably good prioritization. Use the **Action Priority Matrix** to identify your priorities, and then work from a Prioritized List on a daily basis.

Following are some indicators that will let you know that you are procrastinating:

- Filling your day with low priority tasks from your To Do List.
- Reading an e-mail or request that you have noted in your notebook or on your To Do List more than once, without starting work on it or deciding when you're going to start work on it.
- Sitting down to start a high-priority task, and almost immediately going off to make a cup of coffee or check your e-mails.

- Leaving an item on your To Do list for a long time, even though you know it's important.
- Regularly saying "Yes" to unimportant tasks that others ask you to do, and filling your time with these instead of getting on with the important tasks already on your list.

Step 2: Work out WHY you are Procrastinating:

Why you procrastinate can depend on both - you or your task. But it's important to understand the reasons for procrastination for each situation, so that you can select the best approach for overcoming your reluctance to get going.

Following may be some common causes of procrastination:

- When something is difficult
- When you afraid of failure
- When you find the task is time consuming
- When you find the task unpleasant
- When you feel that you lack the required knowledge

Step 3: Get over it:

If you are putting something off because you just don't want to do it, and you really can't delegate the work to someone else, you need to find ways of motivating yourself to get moving. You will have to convince yourself to get over your procrastination. The following approaches can be helpful here:

- Make up your own rewards. For example, promise yourself a party of tasty food at lunchtime if you have completed a certain task.
- Ask someone else to check up on you. Peer pressure always works. This is the principle behind self-help groups, and it is widely recognized as a highly effective approach.

- **Learn To Say NO Graciously:** Here are some phrases to help you to get the message across that you are busy without insulting anyone:
 - Sorry, I can't talk right now, but I will be free after 11:00, if you would like to call back then? •
 - I'm just going to a meeting - can I call you back tomorrow?
 - It's been great talking with you, but right now I need to complete a report. Let's talk again tomorrow / next week.

With the help of all these tips, you can easily manage or minimize from 50%-70% of your interruptions in daily routine work. At the starting, you may find difficult to apply these in daily schedule, but once applied, make this a habit, and you will definitely find a change in your life.

4 D's of Time Management

Now, as you are aware about the time management plan in general and professional life, you need to decide how to handle various tasks that need to be doing/completed, and how to deal with any new task that may arise in between. For this, you need to understand the 4 D's:

- **Do It:** This needs to be done immediately. (Important and Urgent)
- **Delegate It:** It needs to be done, but someone else can handle it. (Less Important but Urgent)
- **Defer It:** This needs doing but not now, it can wait, so postpone it. (Important, but not Urgent)
- **Dump It:** Not important at all, so forget about it. (Neither Important, nor Urgent)

Firstly all tasks should be clearly categorized according to these D's. And after that you need to further set the priorities. More attention is required for 'Do It' category as compared to others.

Procrastination

There are several characteristics of a man which restricts him from performing upto his best level. Procrastination is also such a trait which human being exhibits from his childhood days.

Procrastination means- postponement of things. This is the biggest problem of the human nature. People learn this trait from childhood. We often hear children saying "I will do this after 2 minutes". Every time a child uses this excuse of '.....2 minutes' and day by day this becomes his habit or part of his nature. A person becomes addicted to postpone the things without any reason. Most often people postpone their work to some other day without any reasons, which effects the whole schedule and finally they felt overloaded and suffered from stress. So, there is a strong need to understand reasons behind this and then to rectify those. Some reasons may be:

- Just a habit of Postponing
- Lack of Confidence
- Laziness
- Hesitation to take the Risk
- Toughness of the Work etc.

There may be other reasons also behind this, depending upon the nature of different human beings. But this is the serious problem which needs proper attention. If one can understand the after effects and seriousness of it, it is easy for

- Identify the unpleasant consequences of NOT doing the task, and then try to remove them or make them pleasant.
- Work out the cost of your time to your employer. As your employers are paying you to do the things that they think are important, you are not delivering value for money if you are not doing those things. Shame yourself into getting going.

If you're putting off starting a project because you find it overwhelming, you need to take a different approach. Here are some tips:

- Break the project into a set of smaller, more manageable tasks. You may find it helpful to create an action plan.
- Start with some quick, small tasks if you can, even if these aren't the logical first actions. You'll feel that you're achieving things, and so perhaps the whole project would not be so overwhelming after all.

Effective Aids of Time Management

- **Create a simple "To Do" list on Daily/weekly basis:**

This is a simple program to prepare a list of routine tasks. Simply write down all the tasks that you need to do; try to prepare the list on priority basis. This is just for the purpose of reminder; so that you will not forget anything. Write down everything like appointments, any classes, and meetings or anything on a chart or paper. If you are more visual, sketch out your schedule. First thing in the morning, check what's ahead for the day. Always go to sleep knowing you're prepared for tomorrow.

- **Long term planner:**
 - Use a monthly chart so that you can plan ahead in the near future. Long term planners will also serve as a reminder to constructively plan time for yourself.

- **Set specific goals with specified time:**

A general goal is hard to meet. Be specific and you'll accomplish your task. Also not forget to mention time period i.e. start and stop times. You'll find it easier to begin and be less inclined to delay. Try to prepare even your simple To Do list with specified times. e.g. Prepare 'To Do' list for one day like this:

Task Description	Start Time	End Time

- **Discuss this with somebody:**

Discuss this with someone about what you wish to do. By telling a friend and discussing ways to go about it, you will gain a clearer picture of your goal. You will also find that once you will hear yourself, you'll recognize your goals and will gain insight into organizing your task.

- **Collect more information:**

If this is the first time you are going to attempt any task, then firstly collect more information on that topic, e.g. If you are building a fence, buy a book on the subject so you know how to order equipment, mark the lines, and set in the materials or ask others who have done similar things – get the advice of your neighbours or colleagues. But guard against the tendency to spend so much time gathering information that you

procrastinate actually doing the job. Determine at what point you have enough information and get started.

- **Make immediate tasks:**

Involve yourself into doing something regarding that task. Use a small, time-limited activity to get you going, e.g. if you have to write a report on some project or to make any development plan, put down the first sentence, even if it isn't completely the way you want it. That first step breaks the ice; it is easier to go from that point on. Once you will actually start the activity, you will make a way to reach the end point and will find it easy to complete. Otherwise, you will continually go on procrastinating that work.

- **Start with the pleasant parts first:**

The important thing is to get started. If you have trouble doing that, take the whole task apart and select one aspect that is more pleasant than others or start with the task in which you have more interest. Doing something will inspire you to continue with the remainder.

- **Do it with someone else:**

Some jobs are simply more enjoyable if you do them with a friend, e.g. it may be faster and more fun if you and your friend get together to paint your house. And also as a famous saying "When a Spider Web Unite, It can even Tie Up a Lion", jointly you can achieve more with lots of fun.

- **Reward yourself:**

For years, organized sector has used incentives to increase employee's productivity. Psychologists have also known for a long time that if a person wants to increase the frequency of a particular behavior it is best to reward that behavior. You can use the same principles to make yourself do what you want to do.

There are two main reward systems that you can use: a **daily reward** – that is, some reward for each time you perform the desired behavior, or put in the desired amount of time and a **final reward** – that is, after the completion of your project. Example, if you are working in a group, every time when you complete your project, or get maximum success, try to bring something special to eat from outside like a party, means something different from daily routine. This will inspire others to accomplish the project work pleasantly and with a fun. Everybody will wait for this special event.

For your program, think of rewards that you can use to help yourself get started. Set up both daily and final rewards. It is also important to note that the value of a particular reward may change in the course of time. Take these factors into account, and come up with a new reward whenever necessary.

- **Evaluate your progress:**

For some projects, you'll have a hard time sticking through to the end unless you have some feedback or see some progress along the way. If the project does not provide such signals, then you need to establish them yourself. Keep track of the time you spend by making it down on a chart/paper. Over time, your chart will give you a visual summary of your progress and a boost to your sense of accomplishment.

- **Go public:**

If you want to really increase your chances of success, make your project known to others. The encouragement you'll receive from friends and the social pressure or criticism of some oppositions, you will feel to continue and this will be great motivation. Post your chart where friends and family members can watch your improvement.

Do's and Don'ts of Time Management

- Do update your knowledge from time to time
- Do realize your mistakes when you are wrong at some point
- Do arrive at meetings well prepared and with all relevant documentations
- Do take relevant notes, and give your boss a copy
- Do work out whether your manager prefers written or spoken information, and supply it in that way
- Don't volunteer your opinions unless they are requested or you feel they are important or relevant
- Don't present any problems without offering some viable solutions to them
- Don't be late for meetings with your manager

Time Budgeting

As most people say, time is money. It is also very important that people should learn how to budget time so that they can be more productive and efficient. The time budget is a practical method one can use every day to keep his/her life in balance. As a bonus, the time budget also helps to effectively deal with many productivity killers such as lack of focus, procrastination and perfectionism etc.

Setting a time budget means **proactively allocating shares of time for the things that matter to you**. Similarly to a financial budget, you need to define the ideal amount of time to invest in each of your important life areas, and then stick to that budget for the duration of its allocated time.

When it comes to making some purchase, most people have an idea in their minds of what they are willing to spend.

You probably would not walk into a shoe store and say, 'I will buy that pair of shoes no matter how much that cost'. If the salesperson says the shoes cost Rs.5000/-, most people would not buy them. That's because when it comes to making purchases, people set a budget in their minds of how much a particular thing really worth to them.

But what about when it comes to how you spend your time? Don't you sometimes spend more time on certain tasks than they are really worth? For instance, when it comes to cleaning your home, how much time you spend on doing so? Two hours? Three hours? More than three hours? Is dusting really worth that much of your time? What about your other projects and appointments? How much is that time worth to you?

By setting a time budget for certain activities, you will always ensure your time is being spent on what is most important to you: your family, your future, society or all of them. How much time are you willing to invest with a spouse or loved one? How many hours will you allocate to working, cleaning, exercising, eating or watching television? Before doing anything, ask yourself how much time you are willing to invest. Write those time investments down on a paper or chart. Then, stick to your time budget.

Time isn't an unlimited currency, so be sure to spend it wisely. And, just like in a regular financial budget, the benefits are many. Following a budget prevents you from wasting time on non-critical activities, as it helps you allocate time for the things that are most important to you. As simple as it may sound, on any given moment, your time budget is an easy and practical guide to high-level decisions on how you should invest your time.

How to Create Your Time Budget

There are 4 steps for making a time budget.

- **Organize Yourself around Key Result Areas:**

Forget for a minute about tasks. Focus instead on the 'high priority areas' of your life: those can be big goals, areas of responsibility or major roles — whatever suits you best. Think of these as the "big rocks" of your life — the areas that should get your regular attention. Be as broad or as specific as you want, e.g. as a major project, self knowledge, reading, socializing and exercising may be the main areas for some person. You can also divide these areas in general like self time, family time, friends' time and work time etc.

- **Allocate Time for Each Area:**

Now as you have outlined your key result areas, you need to allocate time to spend on each of these areas. This is of course a very personal decision, but here are some tips that can help you:

- **Don't pay much attention to current tasks:** Remember that budgeting means allotting your time in one way you consider **ideal**. Of course, you need to add extra time for contingencies and other unforeseen circumstances, but consider that they are temporary. Think long-term and mentally isolate yourself from current pressures as much as you can.
- **Be conservative with your overall budgeted time:** You should never commit all of your available time to your budget, as you can never predict the unforeseen external demands and some unpredicted tasks. Budgeting 50% of your available time is a good start (you can be even more conservative in

the beginning and adjust it as you gain more confidence in the process)

- **Use a short time horizon for your time budget:**

If you want to make time budgeting work, you'll need to review your budget regularly. To make it practical, don't wait too long to evaluate how you're doing with your budget. One week is a great time frame for planning and reviewing in general, and that also holds true for your time budget.

- **Spend and Track Your Time:**

As is the case with any budget, you'll need to track your spending to make sure it comes as close as possible to what you've planned. There are many ways to track your time as well as many tools you can use, but in simple form, try to keep a track on a paper. You can also use your daily/weekly planner; from where you can see that how much time you had allotted and how much you take in actual.

- **Review your Spending:**

If you are continuously preparing time budget and also keeping a track of all your spending, even then your actual time spending will not match 100% of what you defined in your budget. But this exercise is important as tracking your time is reviewing your progress and adjusting your budget accordingly. This is what keeps your system dynamic and flexible, as priorities change and as you learn more about yourself and your time spending.

- Did you overspend/under spend time on any particular category?
- Did you allocate too much/too little time for your budget/activities?

- o How do you feel about the amount of time you allocated for each area? Do you feel your life is balanced?
- o Are there any key result areas you initially overlooked?

So by budgeting your time, you have an objective framework to assess your life balance and adjust it accordingly, instead of waiting for a crisis in a life area to do something about it.

Assessing your Time Management Skills -

An Exercise

The key to successful management is the possession of good time-management skills. Find out how well you manage your time by responding to the following statements, and mark the options that are closest to your experience. Be as honest as you can.

And at the end, add your scores together, and refer to the Analysis to see how you scored. Use your answers to identify the areas that need most improvement.

DIRECTIONS: FOR EACH QUESTION, CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOU

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
How often do you plan an effort/task to keep life from running out of control?	1	2	3	4	5

Do you put daily plans on paper?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you allow flexibility in your plans?	1	2	3	4	5
How often do you accomplish all you plan for a given day?	1	2	3	4	5
How often do you plan time for what matters most to you?	1	2	3	4	5
How often is your daily plan destroyed by urgent interruptions?	5	4	3	2	1

SCORING: Add the numbers next to your answers.

INTERPRETATION:

6-10: Terrible Planner

You should consider using new tools and processes to help you plan effectively. A great first step would be to take a time management course.

11-15: Below average planner

You may already have a planning system, but using it more effectively will help to reduce the stress and lack of control you feel in your life.

16-20: Average planner

Your planning system is working, but you can do better. You may need help focusing on priorities, dealing with urgent interruptions or writing your daily plan.

21-25: Above-average planner

Your planning system is working well. Keep up the good work, with periodic reviews to be sure you're planning around what matters most in your life.

26-30: Excellent planner-or candidate for burnout?

You have mastered planning and experienced the serenity that comes from taking charge of your life. But make sure you're in control of your planning rather than letting it control you.

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